

7B1 PLAYING CARDS

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5 This invention relates to playing cards and, in particular, to bifunctional packs of playing cards which may be used to play a variety of entertaining and stimulating card games as well as acting as an informative advertising and educational medium, compendium or catalogue.

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10 Playing cards have been known for centuries and in a very wide variety. A pack of playing cards conventionally consists of a set of individual cards of which one side of each card (the back) is identical throughout the pack, the other side of each card (the face) bearing one among
15 a variety of different designs. The classical "standard playing card" pack consists of fifty-two cards where the fifty two different face designs consist of four "suits", conventionally called clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades, and where each suit (of thirteen cards) has a number or
20 character associated with it, conventionally ace, two to ten, Jack, Queen and King. Additionally, some playing card games require extra cards having a special symbol on them (conventionally called a Joker) which, according to the rules of the game being played, may substitute for a

- 2 -

variety of other cards, or may have its own particular role in the game played.

5 The identical back sides of the cards in a pack are identical predominantly in order that a card player may hold the cards, usually in a single hand and fanned out, with the identical backs visible to the other players and the different face designs visible only to the player holding the cards. Since the other players can see the
10 backs, the backs all need to be identical in order that the other players cannot detect what cards the player holding the cards is holding.

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15 This arrangement of identical backs is effectively necessary for competitive card playing games (especially where the game is played for pecuniary gain), but is not of any particular value in games played for entertainment. I have now found that a variety of entertaining games may be produced by constructing a set
20 of playing cards with the face sides bearing their conventional, or relatively conventional, set of markings and the backs bearing differing designs, but which are coordinated with the designs on the faces in a predetermined fashion. The precise fashion may depend
25 upon the nature of the game to be played with the cards. Thus, the distinguishing feature of packs of playing cards according to my invention is that the coordination of two or more designs on the backs of two or more cards correlates with a coordination of the designs on the
30 faces of those cards, in accordance with an appropriate set of predetermined design criteria.

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Within this general concept, a very wide variety of new types of packs of playing cards can be devised. By way

- 3 -

of example, the backs of some of the cards (or, of course, all of them) may bear words, and the arrangement of the words on the backs of the cards may be such that when the cards are assembled in accordance with a rule
5 applying to the markings on the faces of the cards, the wording on the backs of the assembly of cards is coordinated, e.g. to construct a sentence or sentences, a message of some other sort, or a poem - for example a Clerihew, Haiku or some other short form.

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Thus, it is possible, for example, to conceive of a set of playing cards with conventional ace to King markings on their faces and a series of short lines on their backs such that a conventional four-card trick such as is
15 constructed during the course of a game of Bridge or Whist may constitute a quatrain such as a Clerihew, or three of them may be arranged to provide a Haiku fitting the classical rules for the construction of Haiku. One can then envisage scoring being dependent not merely on
20 the number of tricks which a player collects at the end of a round, but additionally on how many of the sets of three or four cards, when assembled in appropriate order (e.g. rising or descending card face value) form a correctly structured Clerihew or Haiku. A correctly
25 structured Clerihew formed from a set of four cards of which the face values are not all of the same suit might score a bonus.

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1-12-6
In an alternative, sets of cards having face values in sequence may have on their backs individual sections of a complete poem. In such cases, it is often convenient to print, as well as wording, some indication on the backs of the cards as to whether a section of text constitutes the beginning, ending or middle portion of a poem which

- 4 -

can be assembled by collecting a sequence of cards using a conventional set of game-playing rules, e.g. that of a stock pile and discard pile from which each player may pick in turn followed by a discard.

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The coordination on the backs of the cards is not limited to text images, but may be, for example, a set of pictorial or visual images or mix of graphics, text and image which, for example, when assembled in sequence, could form a short "comic strip" or reflect some other pattern, sequence or relationship. Alternatively the assembly may be essentially visual with the cards, when placed together, showing an overall image made up of a number of sub-images, such as one commercial product in a range of such products. The placement of commercial material on the backs of the cards leads to potential commercial gain to organisations, companies or individuals who use the medium to advertise their products or services. Furthermore, the incorporation of a corporate, educational, governmental or other web site address along one edge of each card effectively reminds solo or group players 54 times per pack of the specific telecommunications link to each organisation's, company's or individual's richer store of further detail regarding the subject matter of each pack, or general information about the organisation, company or individual.

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Working on the general basis of coordinating material on the backs and coordinating material on the faces of the cards, an enormously wide variety of packs of cards may be developed with associated "rules for play", with a consequent provision of both enjoyment, education (both academic and commercial) and amusement to the card players.

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5 The inter-relationship of the backs and fronts of packs
of cards in accordance with the present invention may be
achieved by simple physical sorting of a set of backs on
to a set of fronts, or it is possible to write relatively
simple and straightforward computer programs to
10 distribute the designs for the backs appropriately
coordinated with the standard designs on the faces. In
order to provide basic familiarity, it is preferred that
the designs on the faces are relatively straightforward
15 standard four suit card designs.

20 If it is desired to enable the cards to be used in
competitive play, the differing designs on the backs of
the cards may be restricted in area compared to the area
of the entire card back so that a fan of cards shows only
the back of the endmost one, i.e. the roughly chevron-
shaped or L-shaped non-overlap areas all look the same.
Of course, if such cards are dealt out in conventional
fashion - to each player in rotation, one card on top of
another, face down - a skilled observer can detect in
25 which hand cards are, but not very easily. During play,
the back of the card in the fan furthest from the player
holding the fan may be easily obscured by the player's
hand. However, if desired, feats of memory could be part
of the rules of group play, so that the more face values
30 a player could correctly memorise and reproduce from the
differing back texts or images, the higher would be his
final score, and - if the items so correctly memorised
were products or educational or other promoted material -
the higher the pleasure of the organisation, company or
individual whose material is printed on the pack.

Accordingly, in a specific embodiment, a pack of playing
cards according to the present invention has a set of

- 6 -

- 5 differentiated face designs on the card faces and on the card backs a set of designs, each consisting of an outer portion identical on each card and inner portions which differ from card to card and which are coordinated with the designs on the faces as set out above.